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Dayna R Robison 09/20/2006 11:06:52 AM From DB/Inbox: Dayna R Robison

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UNCLAS VIENNA 02740

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ACTION: PAO
INFO: REVIEW DCM AMB DAO POLEC

DISSEMINATION: PAO
CHARGE: PROG

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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/AGS, INR/EU, AND EUR/PPD FOR YVETTE SAINT-ANDRE

OSD FOR COMMANDER CHAFFEE

WHITEHOUSE FOR NSC/WEUROPE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KPAO](#) [AU](#) [OPRC](#)

SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS: September 13, 2006

OeVP-BZOE TV Debate

11. Bartenstein and Westenthaler came across as "buddy-buddy" in the debate, ORF online news comments. The coalition partners were "at pains to emphasize their joint successes of the past six years and to stress common goals, such as preventing a SPOe-Greens coalition government" after the October 1 election. The FPOe/BZOE had been a "reliable and good coalition partner," ORF online news quotes Bartenstein. Westenthaler added that his party would "welcome serving as a controlling junior coalition partner" in the next Austrian government. A joint objective for both parties was to prevent a "shift to the left" in the country's political scene.

Bawag and the SPOe

12. Centrist daily Die Presse quotes political analyst Peter Pelinka as saying the "remaining chances of the SPOe to emerge as the winning party in the October 1 poll will be shattered" if the Bawag debate continues. Similarly, his colleague Fritz Plasser argues the Bawag issue will likely put the Social Democrats on the defensive, which will benefit the parties Austrian protest voters might vote for -- the FPOe, the BZOE and Hans-Peter Martin's List.

American GMO Rice Found in EU

13. According to mass-circulation daily Kurier, one in five US-imported rice samples checked by the EU contained traces of the genetically modified LL601 rice. Although no traces have been found in Austria at this point, the country's Ministry for Health has said it will launch a thorough check of imported rice. Results are expected to be published in ten days. Health hazards can be ruled out, however, the Kurier adds.

Ambassador Speaks on 9/11 in Wels

14. The 9/11 attacks were a tragic moment for Europeans, but "to Americans it was a change of psyche," ORF TV quotes Ambassador McCaw. Breaking up terrorist organizations, and stopping the flow of their financial resources has become increasingly difficult in the past five years, the Ambassador added. Therefore, the US is pushing for increased international cooperation when it comes to exchanging information gleaned by intelligence services and at the judicial level, in order to be able to fight terrorism effectively and to stop incident before they occur. Although the international community does not always share America's views on the issue, the past five years have been a success with regard to counter-terrorism efforts, particularly in terms of international cooperation, teamwork and intelligence sharing, the Ambassador explained in an interview for Oeberoesterreich Heute.

Terror in Damascus

15. "I want very much to give condolences to those who lost their lives defending the embassy and among them apparently Syrian security personnel. I do think the Syrians reacted to this attack in a way that helped secure our people and we very much appreciate that," ORF radio early morning news Morgenjournal quotes Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. According to liberal daily Der Standard, the Syrian Interior Minister has labeled the blast a "terrorist attack." Independent provincial daily Salzburger Nachrichten writes that regime-friendly Syrian commentators and politicians say militant Islamists qualify as the main suspects in yesterday's attacks. Due to the growing anti-American mood in Syria and the entire region in the wake of the Lebanon war and because of US support for Israel, these groups could rely on vast recruiting opportunities in the country, the daily says.

Iran - Iraq Rapprochement

16. According to a report in semi-official daily Wiener Zeitung, al-Maliki is pushing for stability in Iraq in the face of the civil-war-like unrest between representatives of the Shiite and Sunni factions in his country. In this, he is hoping for the support of Iranian President Ahmadinejad. A spokesperson for al-Maliki emphasized that the Iraqi Premier specifically was going to ask the Iranian leader to desist from any attempts at influencing Iraq's domestic affairs, the Wiener Zeitung says.

